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COASTAL ROAD TRIP BY CAR · 5 DAYS, HEATHROW TO WEYMOUTH

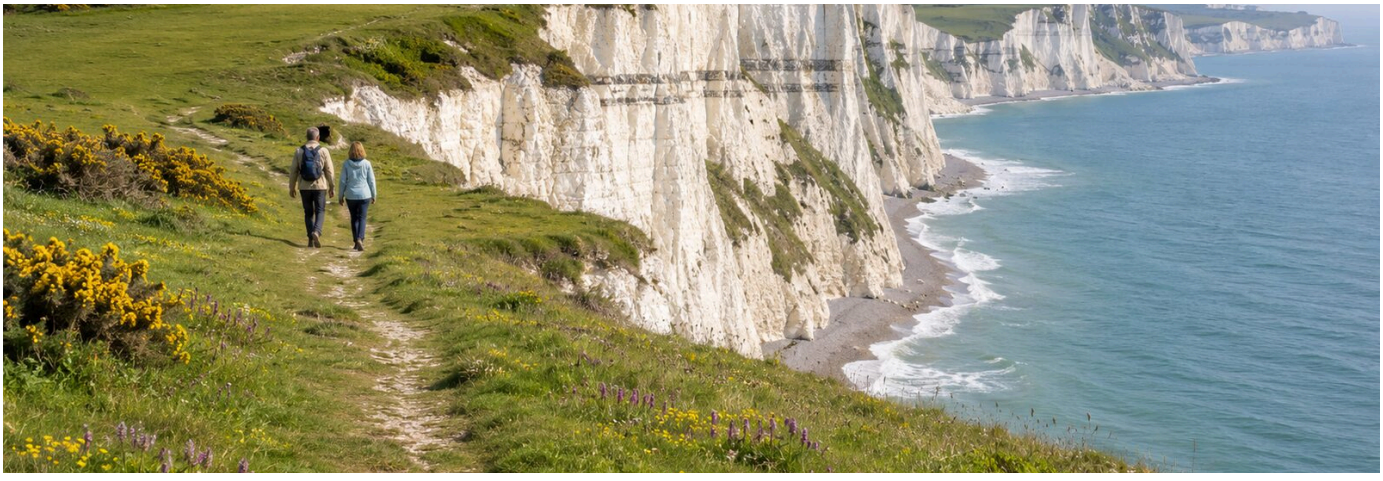
UK - The South Coast - Dover to Dorset Self-Driving Itinerary

Take to the South Coast on this incredible 5-day road trip of England's seaside towns, from the White Cliffs of Dover to the charming Brighton and the wonderful Isle of Wight.

Set out from Heathrow Airport to discover where English soil meets the Channel, encountering the villages and towns that have shaped counties from Kent and Sussex to Hampshire and Dorset. You'll also get the chance to visit the Isle of Wight and put your feet up in this endearing holiday spot before continuing on to Bournemouth and wider Dorset.

DISTANCE	DAYS	ROUTE	DRIVING TIME
About 510 km (315 mi)	5 days, 5 drives	One way, Heathrow to Weymouth	About 8 h by car

LONGEST DRIVE	VEHICLE
165 km (105 mi), Heathrow to Dover	Car or motorhome



The White Cliffs of Dover, day 1 · Illustrative image



Planning overview, not navigation. Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors · coastline Natural Earth · relief Terrain Tiles (Environment Agency, EU-DEM, SRTM).

Picking up at Heathrow

Bring your physical driver's licence, a card in the main driver's name and your booking confirmation to the counter, and check the car against its condition report before you drive away. See what to bring to the counter and checking the car at pick-up. More on car hire at Heathrow Airport.

DRIVE

165 km (105 mi) from Heathrow

about 2 h by car · about 2 h 30 min by motorhome | Via **M25**

DAY 1

Heathrow to Dover

PICK-UP

Finding the right UK rental car for your South Coast road trip is easy with DriveNow. Simply select the type of vehicle you want, pick your dates and let DriveNow do all the hard work and find you the best deals for your trip.

This means that when you touch down at Heathrow, all you have to do is rock on up to your hire car firm, pick up the keys and jump behind the wheel. You'll be skirting around the boundary of London on the

M25 before following the M20 south to Dover.

Spend the day exploring Dover, visiting local sites such as Dover Castle. Building commenced in the 1180s, and since then the castle has seen its fair share of history over the past nine centuries, with its network of secret tunnels being used during the Napoleonic and Second World wars.

You can get a glimpse of the famed White Cliffs of Dover at St Margaret's Bay Beach, or admire the view from the Roman Lighthouse, Britain's oldest standing building.

DRIVE

140 km (86 mi) from Dover

about 2 h 30 min by car · about 3 h by motorhome | Via **A20**

DAY 2

Dover to Rye to Brighton

Head along the A20, passing through Capel-le-Ferne to Folkestone where you can stop in for brunch or a coffee at The Full English or endearing Steep Street Coffee House with its bookshelf-lined walls.

Hug the coastline as you pass through Dymchurch to follow the A259 all the way to Rye, a postcard-perfect mediaeval town in East Sussex that was once home to acclaimed writer Henry James. After grabbing a quick lunch, your next destination is along the A259 at Hastings, where the eponymous battle of 1066 took place. While you're here, take a look at the remains of the castle built by William the Conqueror, as well as the beautifully preserved Old Town.

Your last leg of the day will take you just over an hour along the A259 and A27 right through the heart of the scenic South Downs National Park. Take the turn for the A270 and follow it down to the seaside town of Brighton, your stop for the night.

DRIVE

94 km (59 mi) from Brighton

about 1 h 30 min by car · about 1 h 50 min by motorhome | Via **A27**

DAY 3

Brighton to Portsmouth to the Isle of Wight

Spend the morning exploring the wonderful Brighton, from the iconic pier to the Royal Pavilion and Sea Life Brighton. Make like the locals and grab a seat at Bill's for a scrumptious brunch to fuel you up for the day ahead.

Once you're ready to move on, join the A27 to cut a path through the countryside to Portsmouth, a waterfront city that has a long marine heritage. Spend a leisurely afternoon exploring sites such as the Spinnaker Tower, Southsea Castle, the majestic HMS Warrior 1860, Nelson’s iconic flagship, HMS Victory at the battle of Trafalgar and the Mary Rose, the lead ship in Henry VIII’s navy that sank in 1546 and was raised in 1982. All can be seen at the Portsmouth Historic Dockyard.

Literary buffs might also be keen to squeeze in a visit to the Charles Dickens' Birthplace Museum before making your way to Canalside to catch the Isle of Wight ferry.

After disembarking at Fishbourne on the Isle of Wight, pass through Wootton Bridge to follow the A3054 into Newport, the central town of the island to drop your bags for the night.

Book ahead:
The car ferry from Portsmouth to Fishbourne (Wightlink) carries your hire car, so book your crossing before you go. The crossing takes about 45 minutes.

DRIVE

49 km (30 mi) from Newport (Isle of Wight)

about 1 h by car · about 1 h 20 min by motorhome | Via **A3054**

DAY 4

Isle of Wight to Bournemouth

Welcome to the Isle of Wight! Home to roughly 140,000 people, the island has plenty to offer visitors in terms of old world seaside holiday charm, as well as natural beauty with the Needles Battery along the coast. It's also home to the hugely popular Isle of Wight Music Festival held each June.

With your watch set to island time, take it easy soaking up the atmosphere in Newport before going further afield to visit places such as the Needles rock formations, or the historic Osborne House. There's also Monkey Haven, a sanctuary that is bound to enchant any little ones you have in tow.

Check first:
Monkey Haven closes over winter and asks visitors to book, so check its opening days before you go.

When you're ready to depart from the Isle of Wight, head to Yarmouth to catch the ferry to Lymington. You'll be setting a course west, passing through Christchurch to follow the A338 back to Bournemouth on the coast. Don't miss the golden sands of Hengistbury Head, and the city's beautiful Lower Gardens. You can even try to catch a football game at Vitality Stadium, the smallest stadium in the Premier League.

Book ahead:
Book the Yarmouth to Lymington car ferry (Wightlink) too. The crossing takes about 40 minutes.

DRIVE

60 km (37 mi) from Bournemouth

about 1 h by car · about 1 h 10 min by motorhome | Via **A35**

DAY 5

Bournemouth to Dorchester to Weymouth

RETURN

Spend the morning enjoying Bournemouth, walking along the pier or taking a stroll through the Square with its pavement-side cafes and arcades. There's also the Russell-Cotes Art Gallery & Museum, housed in a splendid Victorian manor.

Get behind the wheel once more and set out along the A35 to Dorchester, a county town with strong ties to Thomas Hardy. Wander through the Dinosaur Museum and visit the Keep before getting a glimpse of the town's Roman origins at the Roman Town House.

> **Check first:**
> The Dinosaur Museum keeps shorter hours outside the summer (weekends only in November, closed in December), so check its opening times before you go.

En route to your final destination of Weymouth, you'll take a drive through the Dorset National Landscape (formerly the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) on the A354. Reunited with the British southern shore, you'll have plenty of time to explore the charm of this seaside town.

Not only the perfect base for exploring the UNESCO World Heritage Site of the Jurassic Coast, Weymouth is also a great place to dive into our West Country road trip, so buckle up and get ready to explore!

Returning the car in Weymouth

Plan to return the car on time with the fuel level your agreement asks for, and if your return time changes, call the branch as soon as you can. See returning your car and late and early returns.

Ready to explore the wonderful south coast of England? If you're looking for a hire car from Heathrow Airport, DriveNow is your first stop for finding the best deals without having to hunt around online.

DriveNow Disclaimer

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DriveNow's suggested itineraries help you plan your own trip. Distances and times are from mapped routes and are a guide only; campervan driving times are car times plus about 20%. Road conditions, closures, opening hours and prices change, so check them before you travel. Any reliance on this itinerary is at your own discretion.

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